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Viewing cable 06CAIRO4200, AG GONZALES MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MUBARAK

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- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06CAIRO4200	2006-07-09 04:00	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Cairo

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 004200

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DOJ PASS TO BRUCE SWARTZ

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/02/2016
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KJUS](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: AG GONZALES MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MUBARAK

Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Stuart Jones for

reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) In a July 1 meeting in his office, a cordial and receptive Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak discussed the ongoing Gaza crisis with Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. Mubarak described Hamas leadership as "untrustworthy," and stressed that if the situation continues to escalate, it will become "irreversible". He noted his personal efforts to work with both the Israelis and Palestinians to develop a workable solution resulting in the release of Israeli Army Cpl. Gilad Shalit, and to convince the Palestinians that Israel would not accept "conditions." He also mocked Hamas' insistence on "international guarantees." He noted that in one of his two telephone conversations with Olmert (since the Gaza crisis erupted June 25) that Olmert had already told Abu Mazen in Jordan a few days earlier that he would release some prisoners when they would next meet, but there was no way that Olmert would agree to name particular prisoners in advance or to specify a number.

¶2. (C) Mubarak said he warned Syrian President Bashar al-Assad explicitly that he would pay a heavy price if he continued to allow Khalid Mishaal to stay in Syria. He noted wryly that even as he was speaking with Assad, Israeli jets were buzzing Damascus -- "Assad must have thought that I had arranged this with the Israelis, and this scared him." He also recapped the exchange a few days earlier between an emissary of Assad and EGIS Chief Soliman at Cairo's military airport (al-Maza), in which Soliman had caught out the Syrians in lying about their dealings with Mishaal, and had warned him in explicit terms about the danger that Mishaal's presence posed to the Assad regime itself.

¶3. (C) Mubarak reported that Turkey and Qatar were attempting to join efforts to resolve the Gaza crisis. He judged that neither country could contribute much, but he had no objection to whatever they might do. He said that each appeared to want to participate as a matter of their national prestige, rather than having specific influence on the Palestinians. The Qataris had said as much, and had offered funding assistance. Mubarak went on to criticize the Palestinians historically for "only being interested in getting Arab money," and he criticized the Arabs for offering it. From here, he went on to relate familiar stories of Saddam Hussein's bribery of Arafat during the Gulf War, and attempts to bribe Egyptian officials and journalists with luxury cars and, in Mubarak's case, with \$25 million in cash.

¶4. (C) AG Gonzales underscored his hope that the Gaza crisis can be resolved quickly and with minimal disruption for the Palestinian civilian population. He thanked Mubarak for his efforts, and offered to relay any request for assistance from the United States. Mubarak asked that the United States "calm" Israel, expressing concern that, should the situation in Gaza deteriorate further, the potential exists for elements of the Gaza population to overrun the Rafah border, and Egypt is "not prepared" for such an eventuality. Mubarak stressed that the humanitarian situation in Gaza is critical because the Palestinians had only five days worth of food, water, and medicine remaining.

¶5. (C) Highlighting the daily incitement to terror televised by the Hezbollah-run Al Manar channel, Gonzales requested that GOE use existing laws to prohibit Al Manar from being broadcast via Egypt-based NileSat television. Mubarak responded that Al Manar is a "sensitive" issue, and Egypt is not ready to prohibit it from utilizing NileSat, as this would create "big problems with Hezbollah." Commenting on Egyptian relations with Iran, Mubarak expressed his personal reluctance to re-start diplomatic relations with Iran. He underscored his recommendation that the United States work through diplomatic channels to address issues with the Iranians, and not consider the use of force, noting that Egypt's position towards Iran is "balanced" in order to avoid any escalation in tensions.

¶6. (C) Mubarak stated that he does not foresee a near-term solution to the current violence and political challenges in

Iraq. He described the Iraqi people as ""tough"" and in need of a strong leader with robust central authority, rather than a decentralized U.S.-style democracy. Expressing his concern about the rising influence of the Shiite population, especially in Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait, Mubarak said the region overall is being ""threatened"" by increasing Shi'a power. He cautioned AG Gonzales not to trust the Shiites, and warned, ""the Islamists will stab you in the back.""

¶7. (C) AG Gonzales reviewed his June 29 meetings with the Minister of Justice, Minister of Interior, and Public Prosecutor General, commending the overall progress in new Egyptian legislation in promoting the rule of law, and praising Mrs. Mubarak for her work on trafficking in persons issues.

¶8. (U) The Attorney General's staff has cleared on this cable.
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